

CORRECTED VERSION

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
24 December 2003 (24.12.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2003/106310 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **B65G 49/07**

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(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2003/018705

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(22) International Filing Date: 12 June 2003 (12.06.2003)

(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

(25) Filing Language: English

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

(26) Publication Language: English

Published:

(30) Priority Data: *14 Dec 04*
60/388,959 14 June 2002 (14.06.2002) US

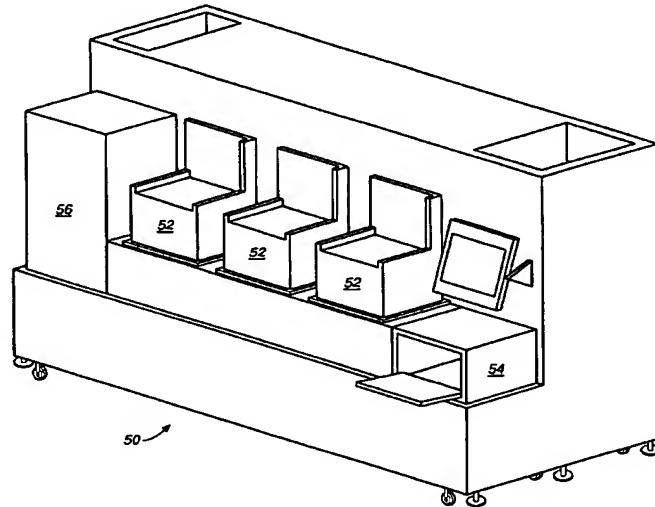
— with international search report

[Continued on next page]

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(54) Title: UNIVERSAL RETICLE TRANSFER SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A specially adapted SMIF pod (20) receives and holds one particular type of reticle cassette (36) or reticle holder (132) selected from among dozens of different configurations thereof. The SMIF pod (20) may be interrogated to determine the particular type of reticle cassette (36) or reticle holder (132) carried therein. A reticle transfer system (50) receives a pair of such SMIF pods (20), interrogates each of the SMIF pods (20) to ascertain which type of reticle cassette (36) or reticle holder (132) the SMIF pod (20) carries, and automatically moves reticles (42) through a controlled environment from one reticle cassette (36) or reticle holder (132) to another reticle cassette (36) or reticle holder (132). A reticle reorienter (56) includable in the system (50) also permits automatically exchanging reticles (42) between a reticle carrier (144) and a reticle cassette (36) or reticle holder (132).

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